

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 AF-04 EUR-08 SP-02 NSC-05
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R 060345Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9174
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 421

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR CH UR US
SUBJECT: RUSSIAN-CHINESE RELATIONS

REF: BANGKOK 9872 (NOTAL)

1. I WAS ALSO HARANGUED BY MY SOVIET COLLEAGUE AT THE
APRIL 4 HUNGARIAN NATIONAL DAY VIN D'HONNEUR HERE IN
VIENTIANE. AMBASSADOR PODOLSKI WAS A GOOD BIT LESS
DRAMATIC THAN ILYICHEV AND NEVER SAID HE WAS SPEAKING
ON INSTRUCTIONS OR USED SUCH TERMS AS "A SITUATION OF
EXTREME GRAVITY."

2. PODOLSKI INSTEAD STRESSED THE SOVIET UNION'S
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GENERALLY PEACEFUL INTENTIONS AROUND THE WORLD. HE
PARTICULARLY EMPHASIZED MOSCOW'S DESIRE FOR A SALT
ACCORD. HE CRITICIZED ISRAEL'S LEBANESE INCURSION AND
PRESIDENT CARTER'S WAKE FOREST SPEECH. WHEN I CLAIMED
OUR MILITARY PROGRAMS WERE IN RESPONSE TO SOVIET EFFORTS
SUCH AS THE GROWTH OF THEIR NAVY, PODOLSKI CLAIMED THAT
THE USSR HAD ARMED ITSELF ONLY IN RESPONSE TO WESTERN

ARMS PROGRAMS.

3. PODOLSKI MENTIONED PRESIDENT CARTER'S TRIP TO AFRICA. I POINTED OUT HOW SERIOUSLY WE VIEWED THE SOVIET/CUBAN PRESENCE IN ETHIOPIA. PODOLSKI SAID HE WANTED TO ASSURE ME THAT NO ETHIOPIAN FORCES (HE DID NOT MENTION SOVIET OR CUBAN TROOPS) WOULD CROSS THE BORDER INTO SOMALIA. HE SAID THAT THE ETHIOPIANS HAD ONLY WANTED TO REPEL AN INVASION AND THAT THEY HAD HAD EVERY RIGHT TO REQUEST AND RECEIVE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE. I THANKED HIM FOR HIS ASSURANCE ON BORDER CROSSING, SAID I WAS AWARE THAT SUCH ASSURANCES HAD BEEN GIVEN ELSEWHERE, AND SAID THAT HE SHOULD BE AWARE THAT THE SOMALI INVASION OF ETHIOPIA HAD BEEN UNDERTAKEN WITH SOVIET WEAPONS. PODOLSKI DID NOT DENY THAT MOSCOW HAD "SOLD" WEAPONS TO THE SOMALIS BUT HAD DONE SO ONLY FOR "DEFENSIVE PURPOSES" (SIC).

4. PODOLSKI ASKED ME WHAT I THOUGHT OF THAI PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK'S VISIT TO CHINA. I SAID THAT THE THAIS WERE ANXIOUS TO BE FRIENDS WITH AS MANY POWERS AS POSSIBLE, PARTICULARLY SINCE THEY FELT THREATENED BY THE VIETNAMESE. PODOLSKI SAID THAT HE DID NOT SEE WHY THE RTG SHOULD FEEL THREATENED BY HANOI AND POINTED OUT THAT KRIANGSAK HAD A POLICY OF FRIENDSHIP WITH HANOI. I

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AGREED THAT THIS WAS THE CASE BUT SAID THAT THE THAIS STILL FELT NERVOUS ABOUT THE SIZE OF THE VIETNAMESE ARMY, ITS BATTLE-PROVEN PROWESS, AND ITS LARGE STOCKS OF CAPTURED U.S. ARMS. PODOLSKI SAID BANGKOK SHOULD NOT BE WORRIED -- THE SRV HAD TOO MUCH TO DO IN THE WAY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TO THINK ABOUT BOTHERING THAILAND. (NEITHER I NOR PODOLSKI MENTIONED THE ONGOING VIETNAMESE-CAMBODIAN BORDER WAR.)

5. LATER THE SAME DAY, I HAD A FAIRLY LENGTHY CHAT WITH MY CHINESE COLLEAGUE, HSU HUANG. I WANTED TO ASK HIM ABOUT CHINESE ROAD BUILDING IN NORTHERN LAOS, AND AFTER HE HAD TOLD ME WHAT I WANTED TO KNOW (SEPTTEL), HE LAUNCHED INTO HIS BY NOW STANDARD HARANGUE ABOUT THE DANGEROUS SITUATION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA. HE SAID THAT SOVIET AND CUBAN ACTIONS WERE "VERY SERIOUS". I AGREED THAT THE U.S. WAS OPPOSED TO THIS FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN AFRICAN AFFAIRS AND POINTED OUT THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAD MADE THIS VERY CLEAR DURING HIS VISIT TO NIGERIA. HSU HUANG SAID HE WAS GLAD TO HEAR OF THE PRESIDENT'S STAND AND SAID THAT HE HOPED THE WEST WOULD ACT VERY FIRMLY TO OPPOSE THE SOVIETS IN AFRICA.

6. COMMENT: THIS IS PROBABLY A FULLER REPORT THAN THE MATERIAL DESERVES, BUT IF EMBASSY BANGKOK HAS COME ACROSS A FORMAL SOVIET DIPLOMATIC CAMPAIGN, THE FOREGOING MIGHT BE OF MORE THAN ROUTINE INTEREST.
ROBERTS

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